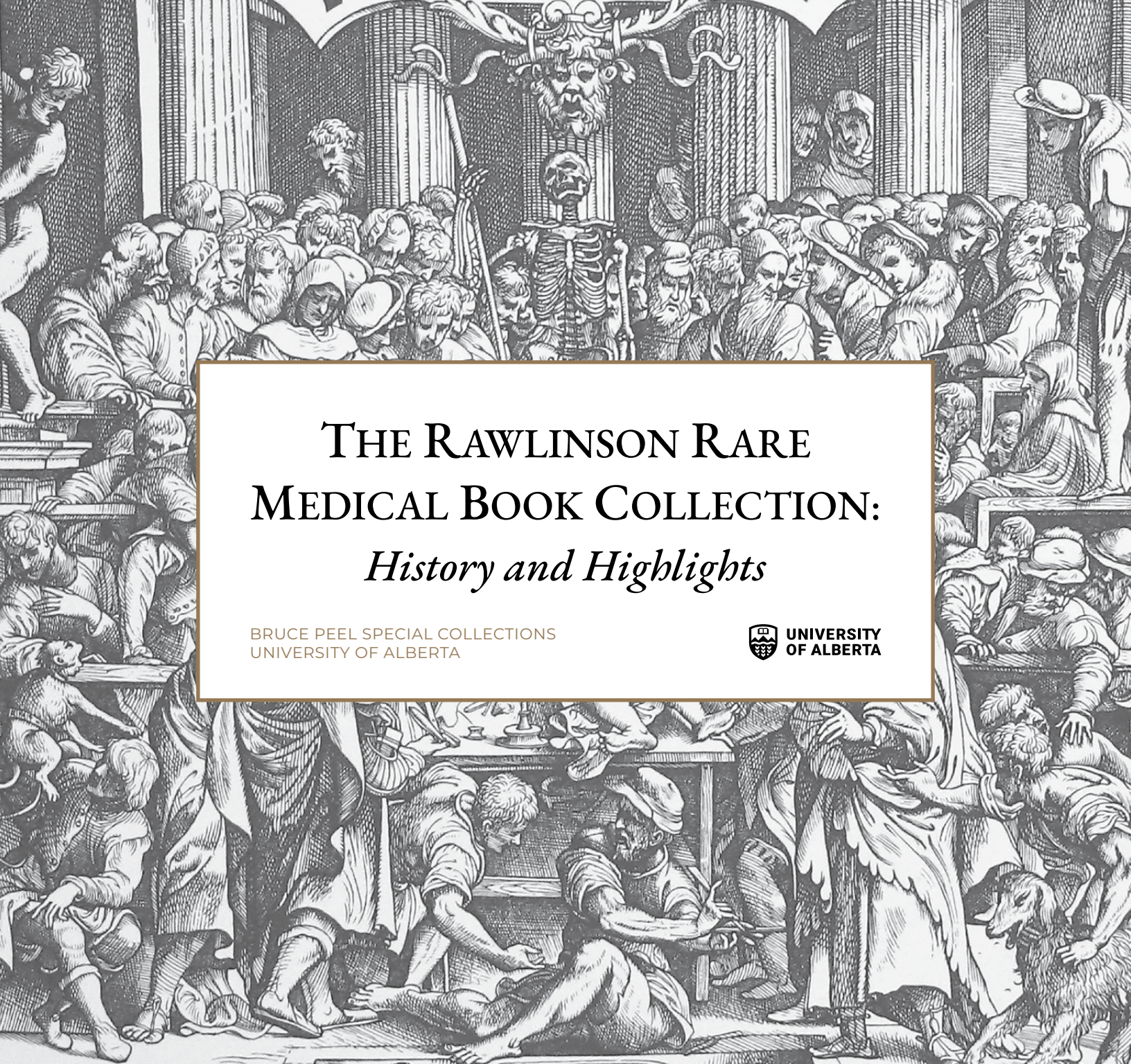

The Rawlinson Rare Medical Book Collection:

History and Highlights

BRUCE PEEL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Bruce Peel Special Collections
B7 Rutherford South
Edmonton, AB, Canada
T6G 2J4

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Linda Quirk, and Robert Desmarais

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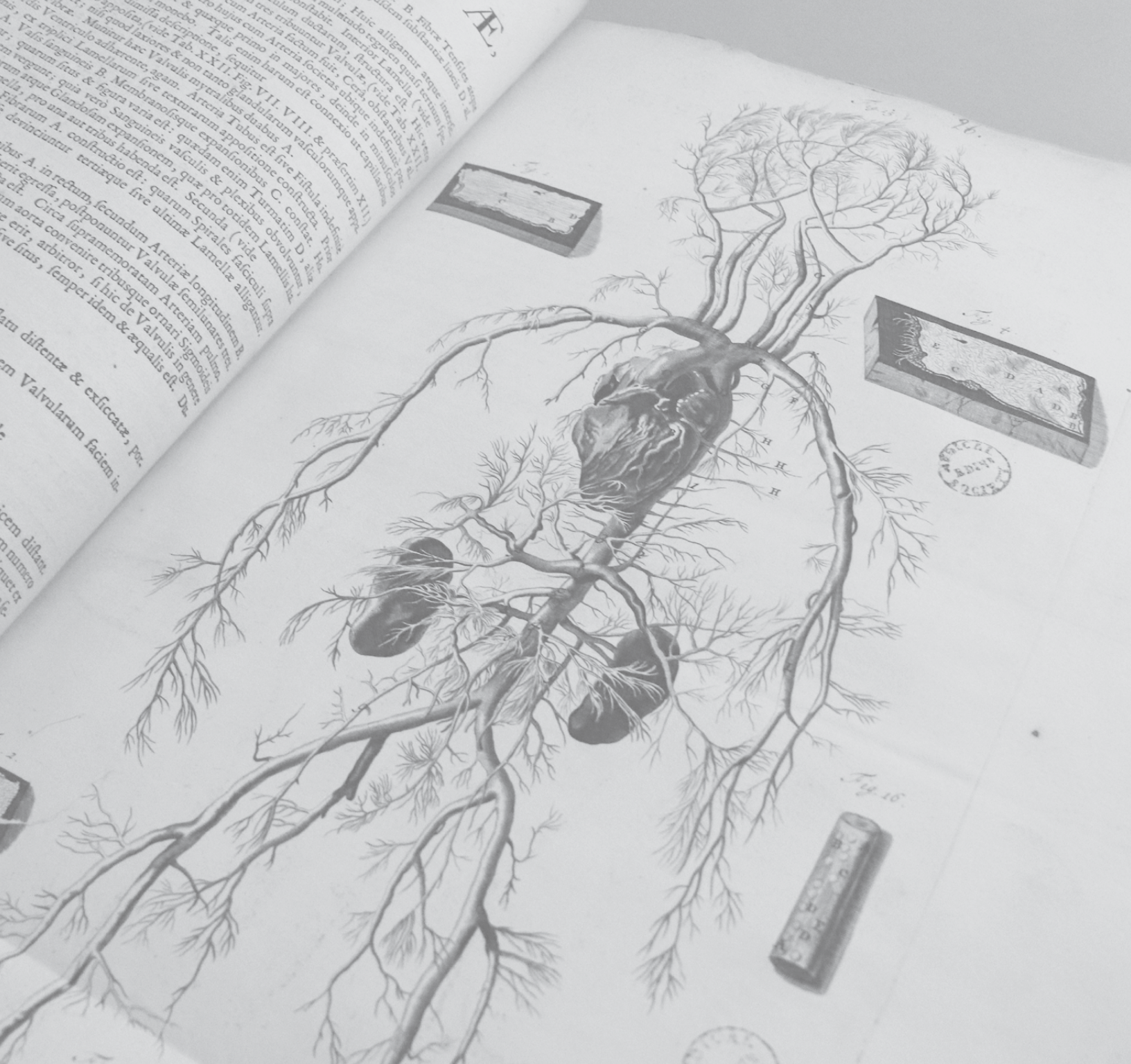
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



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Introduction

Since ancient times medical texts have been produced and used to inform the treatment of diseases and injuries and the care of the human body. They showcase an understanding of the world, the role of religion and spiritual beliefs, and the development of scientific thought at a certain point in human history. They reveal the political beliefs at play or even at war with one another in a particular place and at a particular time and, as such, are sources of historical information, not only about the body, diseases, and treatments, but also about society as a whole. The *Rawlinson Rare Medical Book Collection* at the University of Alberta (U of A), while relatively small, at around 2000 volumes, gives us an invaluable glimpse not only into past understandings of the human body, but also into the societal factors that shaped those understandings. In addition, this collection has local significance, as it showcases the medical beliefs and practices that shaped the prairies, generally, and Alberta, specifically, over the past century and a half while providing a record of important historical events in Western Canadian health care.

THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF
The Rawlinson Rare Medical Book Collection

The rarest and most valuable materials from the *Rawlinson Collection* (approximately 250 volumes) are housed on the shelves at Bruce Peel Special Collections at the University of Alberta. This climate- and humidity-controlled space provides the ideal environment for the preservation of the collection, with volumes dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is a secure, closed-stack library that offers visitors access to materials in a supervised reading room where one can touch, examine, and marvel at these rarities.

At present, the *Rawlinson Collection* spans a breadth of subject areas related to the practice of medicine and other health sciences. It is particularly strong in the fields of anatomy, herbal medicine and plant cures (many rare pharmacopeias are included), women's health (including obstetrics and gynecology), medical education, neurology, domestic medicine, epidemics and public health, and Western Canadian medical history. The collection's strength in these fields is due mostly to the fact that the main donors of the collection were medical faculty at the U of A who specialized or had a special interest in these fields.

Information about the history of the *Rawlinson Collection* and those who donated to it is sparse and found mainly in archival documents, letters, and notes left behind by previous librarians and staff. These sources have been used here to provide a description of how the *Rawlinson Collection* came to be and how particular items were acquired.

Dr Herbert E. Rawlinson and the Birth of the Collection

Dr Herbert E. Rawlinson was an early graduate from the Faculty of Medicine at the U of A and served as a professor there from 1927 to his resignation in 1962. His primary interest was Anatomy, and he regularly taught the subject to medical students. He was also the President of the Medical Alumni Association in 1950-1951. In 1975, Rawlinson passed away in Victoria, British Columbia. His personal collection of books (around 550 titles) form the core of the collection posthumously named after him. Other donors who added significantly to the collection include:

- **Dr Heber H. Moshier**, a practitioner of internal medicine, joined the U of A faculty in 1913 as Director of Pharmacy and Professor and Head of Physiology. He founded the Student Medical Service and organized a World War I field ambulance unit manned by Western Canadian medical students. He was fatally wounded in 1918, at age 29, while serving with the Canadian Army Medical Corps.
- **Dr Heber C. Jamieson** joined the U of A Faculty of Medicine in 1913 and became Professor of the History of Medicine in 1925. A bacteriologist, internist, and medical historian, he authored *Early Medicine in Alberta: The First Seventy-five Years*, which was published by the Canadian Medical Association in 1947.
- **Dr Allan C. Rankin**, a bacteriologist, became the first Dean of Medicine at the U of A in 1920. He served in the role until 1945, with a period of absence from 1939 to 1943 to serve in WWII.

Fig. 1. Photograph of Herbert E. Rawlinson. UAA-1995-165-003, University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton.

Fig. 2. Photograph of Herber C. Jamieson (white coat) and students, 1914. UAA-1981-104-00 2-080, University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton.

The Mewburn Family, A "Canadian Archive"

On July 19, 1984, University President Myer Horowitz accepted with gratitude a donation made by Mr Robert Mewburn of Qualicum Beach, BC of personal medical certificates (some dating back 200 years) and a number of rare books, collected by several generations of the Mewburn family (Chetner).

With its seven generations of physicians, the Mewburn family has been described as "in itself a Canadian archive" (Chetner). The first physician of the family practiced in mid-1700s England and was trained by apprenticeship. His son and grandson were trained in Guy's and St Thomas's hospitals in London. In 1832, surgeon John Mewburn emigrated to Upper Canada bringing with him many medical texts and lecture notes, numerous medical certificates (some of which are displayed here), and even some dissections that belonged to him and to relatives before him. These items were passed on from father to son through another four generations of physicians. They were brought west by Frank Hamilton Mewburn, John Mewburn's grandson, an honoured and storied pioneer, an Alberta physician, and the first Professor of Surgery at the U of A (Macbeth). Almost one hundred years later, the collection of Mewburn medical texts and artifacts came to the University of Alberta Library and was incorporated into the special collection named for H.E. Rawlinson, a colleague of Frank Mewburn's in the early years of the Faculty of Medicine. The Mewburn collection was donated after the death of Frank Hamilton Mewburn's son, Dr Robert Hamilton Mewburn, the last of the medical Mewburns (Chetner).

THEATRE
St. Thomas's Hospital

Fig. 4. Certificate for surgery lectures completed by John Mewburn in 1809 at St Thomas's Hospital, London.

Midwifery

Fig. 5. Certificate belonging to Francis Mewburn for lectures and practice in Midwifery, dated 25 June 1776.

A Collection on the Move

As the *Rawlinson Collection* grew and more items of value or that were fragile were added, it became necessary to relocate items to a more suitable environment. In its early years the collection was housed at Cameron Library, but in the mid 1980s, it made its way to the newly built John W. Scott Health Sciences Library (at the U of A Hospital) and the Phyllis Russell Rare Books Room. In 2018 a portion of the collection was moved to Bruce Peel Special Collections.

Anatomical Lectures by Mr. Hunter

Compiled by Francis Mewburn
(1755)
QM 21 H87 1755

A notable item included in the Mewburn donation is a set of handwritten notes made in 1755 by Francis Mewburn, the first of the seven generations of Mewburn physicians, at lectures on surgery given in London by William Hunter. Hunter was an eminent eighteenth-century anatomist and obstetrician who is often called the father of surgical anatomy. He revolutionized the teaching of anatomy and spearheaded its addition to the training of physicians in England. This item is also notable for the elegance and clarity of the handwriting. It was passed down in the Mewburn family for some 230 years before it was donated to the U of A in 1984.

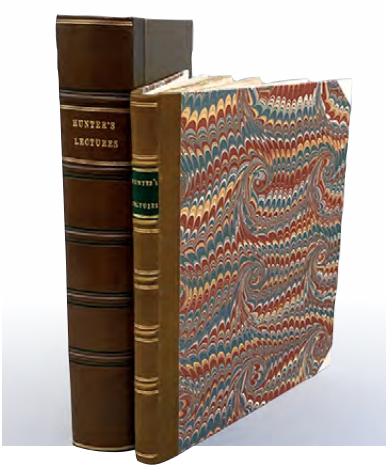


Fig. 6. Front covers of bound William Hunter Lectures.

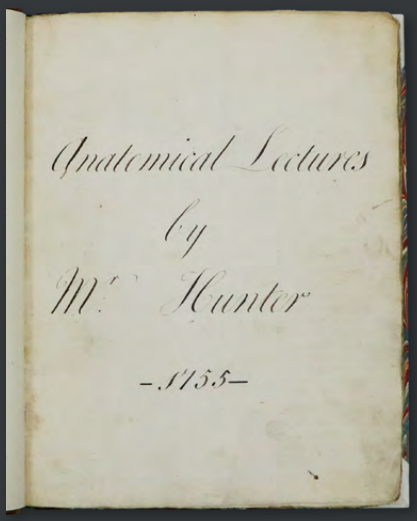


Fig. 7. Handwritten title page of Hunter Lectures, dated 1755.

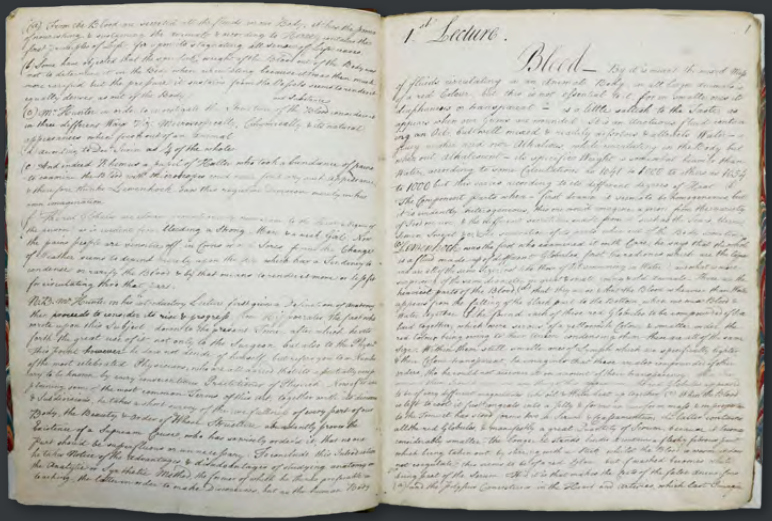


Fig. 8. Lecture notes on the topic of blood, handwritten by Francis Mewburn.

A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Anatomy

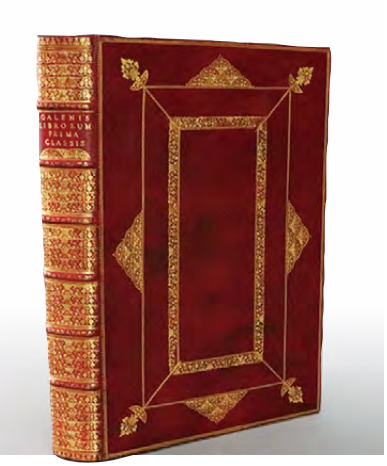


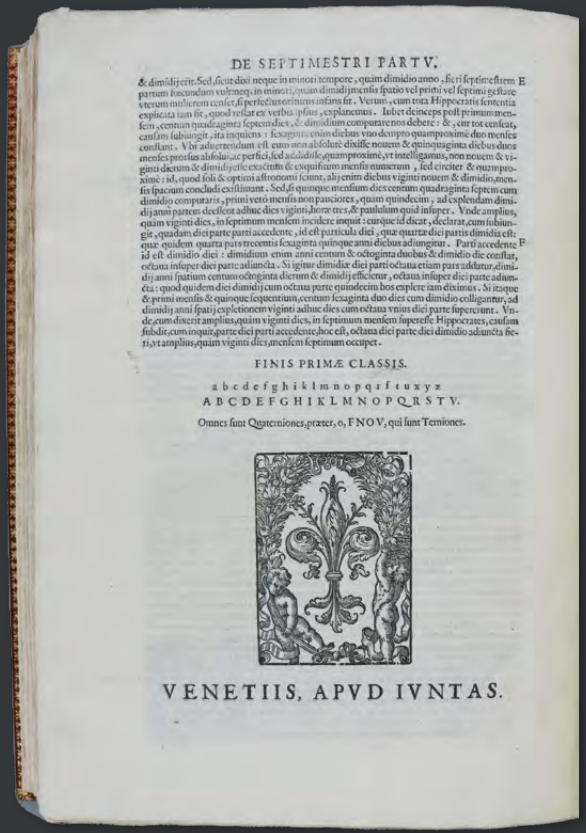
Fig. 9. Leather bound front cover of 1625 edition of Galen's *Librorum Prima Classis*.

Librorvm prima classis: Natvram corporis hvmani, hoc est elementa, temperaturas, hvmores, structurae, habitudinisq; modos, partium anatomas, vsus, facultates, & actiones, seminis deniq; foetuumq; tractationes, complectens...

Galen
(Venetiis: Apvd Ivntas, 1625)
R 126 G55 1625 folio

This 1625 edition of Galen's *Librorum Prima Classis*—the full title of which translates roughly to "Books first class: Nature of the human body, that is the elements, tempers, humours, structures, habitudes; methods, anatomical parts, uses, resources, and actions as seed"—is one of 11 volumes of a Latin translation of Galen's collected works, published by the heirs of Venetian printer Lucantonio Giunti, whose printer's device appears on the title page and the last page.

Considered one of the most influential figures in the history of medicine, Galen (129-216 AD) was a Greek physician, surgeon, and philosopher during the Roman Empire. He is seen as a seminal figure in the development of various scientific disciplines—including anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, and neurology—as well as philosophy and logic. His works and theories were widely consulted, read, and taught until the seventeenth century and significantly influenced understanding of the human body and disease for centuries. Since human dissection was banned during his lifetime, Galen based his research and teachings about the human body on the dissection of animals (see Fig. 11 for a depiction of the dissection of a pig) and the practice of vivisection (surgical experimentation on live animals). His works are also concerned with perfecting Hippocrates's humoral theory: the idea that disease is caused when the four humors—phlegm, yellow bile, black bile, and blood—are out of balance (Nutton).



DE SEPTIMESTRI PARTV.

& dimidij erit. Sed, ſicut dixi neque in minori tempore, quàm dimidio anno, fieri ſeptimeſtrem E partum fœcundum vult meq; in minori, quàm dimidij menſis ſpatio vel prithi vel ſeptimi geſtare vterum mulierem cenſet, ſi perfectus oriturus infans ſit. Verum, cum tota Hippocratis ſententia explicata iam ſit, quod reſtat ex verbis ipſius, explanemus. Iubet deinceps poſt primam menſem, centum quadraginti ſeptem dies, & dimidium computare nos debere: &, cur tot cenſeat, cauſam ſubiungit, ita inquiens: ſexaginta enim diebus vno dempto quamproximè duo menſes conſtant. Vbi aduertendum eſt eum non abſolutè dixiſſe nouem & quinquaginta diebus duos menſes prorſus abſolui, ac perfici, ſed addidiſſe, quamproximè, vt intelligamus, non nouem & viginti dierum & dimidij eſſe exactum & exquiſitum menſis numerum, ſed circiter & quamproximè: id, quod ſolis & optimis aſtronomis ſciunt, alij enim diebus viginti nouem & dimidio, menſis ſpacium concludi exiſtimant. Sed, ſi quinque menſium dies centum quadraginta ſeptem cum dimidio compararis, primi verò menſis non pauciores, quam quindecim, ad explendam dimidij anni partem deeſſent adhuc dies viginti, horæ tres, & paululum quid inſuper. Vnde amplius, quàm viginti dies, in ſeptimum menſem incidere inquit: cumque id dicat, declarat, cum ſubiungit, quadam diei parte parti accedente, id eſt particula diei, quæ quartæ diei partis dimidia eſt: quæ quidem quarta pars trecentis ſexaginta quinque anni diebus adiungitur. Parti accedente F id eſt dimidio diei: dimidium enim anni centum & octoginta duobus & dimidio die conflat, octaua inſuper diei parte adiuncta. Si igitur dimidiæ diei parti octaua etiam pars adiatur, dimidij anni ſpatium centum octoginta dierum & dimidij efficietur, octaua inſuper diei parte adiuncta: quod quidem diei dimidij cum octaua parte quindecim hos explere iam diximus. Si itaque & primi menſis & quinque ſequentium, centum ſexaginta duo dies cum dimidio colligantur, ad dimidij anni ſpatij capletionem viginti adhuc dies cum octaua vnius diei parte ſupererunt. Vnde, cum dixerit amplius, quàm viginti dies, in ſeptimum menſem ſupereſſe Hippocrates, cauſam ſubdit, cum inquit, parte diei parti accedente, hoc eſt, octaua diei parte diei dimidio adiuncta fieri, vt amplius, quàm viginti dies, menſem ſeptimum occupet.

FINIS PRIMÆ CLASSIS.

a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r ſ t u x y z

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V.

Omnes ſunt Quaterniones, præter, o, FNOV, qui ſunt Terniones.

VENETIIS, APVD IVNTAS.

Fig. 10. *Fleur de lis* printer's device of the Florentine Giunti family that was based in Venice.

GALENI

LIBRORVM

PRIMA CLASSIS

NATVRAM CORPORIS HVMANI,

hoc eſt elementa, temperaturas, humores, ſtructuræ habitudinisq; modos, partium anatomas, vſus, facultates, & actiones, ſeminis denique, fœtuumq; tractationes, complectens:

NONA HAC NOSTRA EDITIONE,

non parum tucrementi, ac ornamenti adepta, locis plurimis quàm in aliis ſuperioribus editionibus ad Græcorum librorum fidem emendatis.

Locis Hippocratis, quos ſubinde citat Galenus, in margine indicatis.

Et aliis etiam annotationibus additis.

Librorum numerum verſa pagina indicat.

VENETIIS, APVD IVNTAS. MDCXXV.

Fig. 11. Title page bordered by woodcuts showing scenes from Galen's life including the dissection of a pig.

Andreae Vesalii Bruxellensis Icones anatomicae / Ediderunt Academia medicinae nova-eboracensis et Bibliotheca Universitatis monacensis.
Vesalius, Andreas
(Monachis: Ex officina Bremensi, 1934)
QM 25 V57 1934

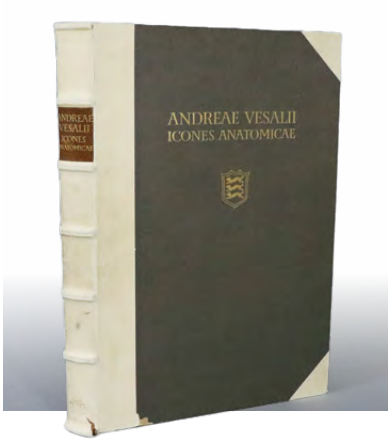


Fig. 12. Front cover of *Andreae Vesalii Bruxellensis Icones anatomicae.*

This 1934 full sized printed edition of various works by Andreas Vesalius contains all the illustrations of his most famous text *De Humanis Corporis Fabrica* (including the title pages of the 1543 and 1555 editions), the *Epitome* (1543), and *Von des menschen Cörpers Anatomey* (1543), reproduced from J.S. van Calcar's original woodblocks (most of which were later destroyed). To these are added collotype reproductions of the illustrations of *Tabulae Anatomicae*.

The reprinting was made when the New York Academy of Medicine used the original 400-year-old woodcut engravings to generate a newly published set of illustrations. Unfortunately, 50 of the original 277 woodcuts had gone missing, so the publication only contains 227 illustrations. This was the last reprinting ever made, as the wood blocks were destroyed in the bombing of Munich during World War II.

Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) was a sixteenth-century anatomist, physician, and author of one of the most influential books on human anatomy, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem (On the Fabric of the Human Body in Seven Books)*. Often called the "Father of Modern Anatomy," he introduced a new scientific tradition of relying not only on texts of old (like those of Galen), but also on experiencing actual human dissection (Jeremy M. Norman).

His detailed and encyclopedic works on the structure of the human body were based on examinations and dissections of human corpses (and not animals, as was previous practice). These examinations and dissections provided a fuller and more elaborate understanding of human anatomy than had been known before and corrected errors in the teachings of Galen that had been passed down for hundreds of years. In addition, through his emphasis on the notion that medical students must not solely depend on the teachings of their elders

Fig. 13. Found in the introduction of *De Fabrica*, this image is the only known first-hand portrait of Vesalius, shown with a partly dissected corpse. Vesalius engages the viewer directly and intensely, showcasing his work exploring the human body and emphasizing its importance.

but must also explore the workings of the human body themselves, he significantly changed the way that medicine was taught.

Vesalius created the drawings for *Tabulae* together with a Flemish artist, Jan Stephan van Calcar (1499–1546). Developments in artistic representation and woodcut printing during the Renaissance allowed Vesalius to produce illustrations superior to any previously created. The life-like poses presented in *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* blend anatomy with human emotion and experience. The anatomically accurate muscular figures exude vitality, health, and strength. Other figures evoke serious thoughts and emotions, conveying the sadness and grief associated with aging and loss. The practice of dissection, thus, was set in a context of profound human emotions and not static, lifeless figures, as it had been before. These images also echo conventions in Renaissance paintings of the time: figures use allegorical poses often found in contemporary paintings of ancient myths. The backgrounds are detailed, and they picture towns, villages, and countryside found commonly in the artwork of that time. This use of Renaissance pictorial elements elevates the plates to genuine works of art (Vesalius, Saunders and O'Malley).

Fig. 14. The title page of *De Fabrica* presents a stage-like scene of a public human dissection with Vesalius and a corpse as the centerpiece. Vesalius touching the body underscores the importance of hands-on experience and observation.

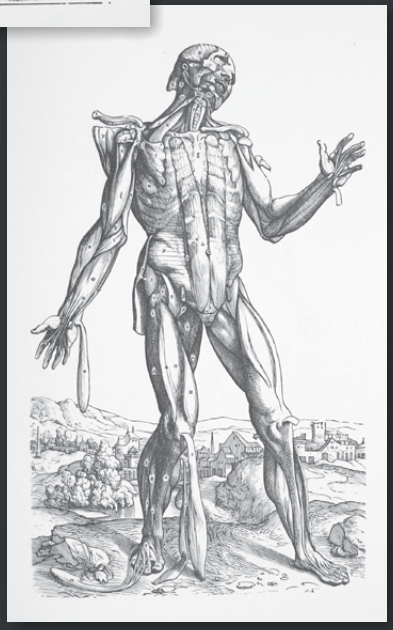


Fig. 15. One of the anatomical figures from *De Fabrica*. Note the use of Renaissance painting conventions in the posing of the body and the emotional expression of the face and in the detailed Italian landscape as a background.

Anatomia hvmani corporis, centum & quinque tabvlis, per artificiosiss

Bidloo, Govard
(Amsteledami : sumptibus viduae Joannis à Someren [etc.], 1685)
QM 21 B585 1685

A 1685 copy of *Anatomia Humani Corporis*, the most famous work of Govard Bidloo, Dutch physician, anatomist, professor, poet, playwright, and eventually the personal physician of King William III of England, this work also contains 105 drawings by the Belgian painter Gérard de Lairesse.

Fig. 16. On the frontispiece to his anatomical atlas, Govard Bidloo, holding a scalpel, is depicted as the new Vesalius in a portrait by Gérard de Lairesse, engraved by Abraham Blooteling.

Anatomia Humani Corporis is not primarily known for its anatomical accuracy or its medical significance but rather for the artist who created the drawings for the copper printing plates. Gérard de Lairesse was a pupil of Rembrandt and drew the anatomical figures without instruction from Bidloo. Human figures are represented as lifeless dissected cadavers unlike the idealized figures in Vesalius's works from a century before. As Bidloo conducted the dissections, Lairesse prepared the drawings, creating a deep sense of realism—with the table, knives, pins, and other dissecting implements included in the illustrations. He even went so far as to include flies that had landed on the cadaver! This emphasis on depicting bodies faithfully brings the qualities of seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting into anatomical illustration (Kuretsky).

While the images in *Anatomia Humani Corporis* are recognized as being artistically good, they lack the technical detail necessary for an anatomic atlas. Despite this fact, the work's use of intaglio printing techniques (also known as metal engraving or etching) and large-scale images provided a sense of grandeur that anatomists had never seen before (Roberts and Tomlinson).

Fig. 17. Allegorical frontispiece showcasing a female personification of Anatomy holding a book in her left hand and a scalpel in her right. Below the sculpture three *putti* play with a dissection drawing, a skull, and a severed arm. At the lower left, pointedly overlapping one of the skeletons, an ancient Father Time, with his hourglass and scythe, draws aside a large curtain to reveal the scene as if it were on a stage (Kuretsky).

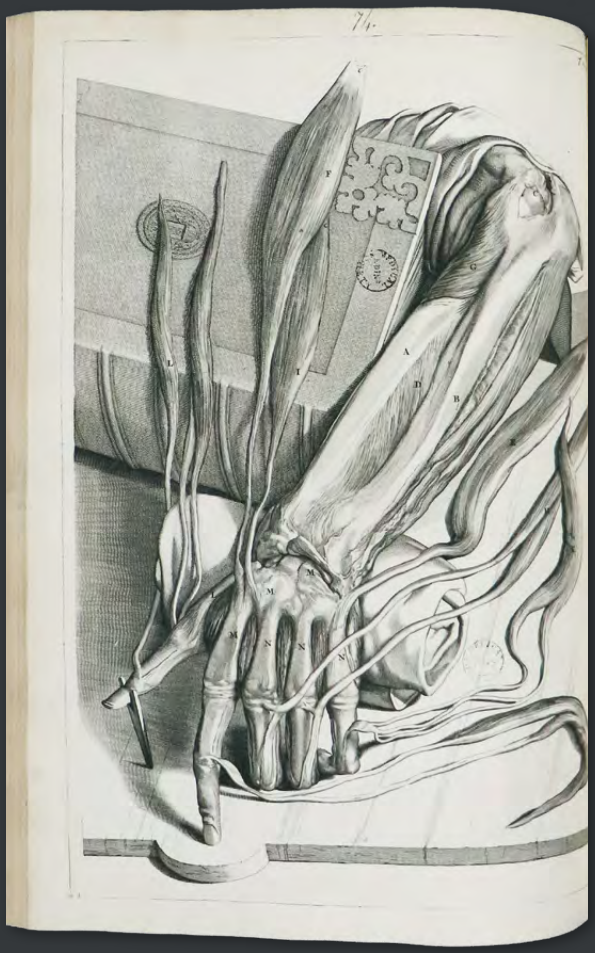


Fig. 18. Dissection of the muscles of the hand.

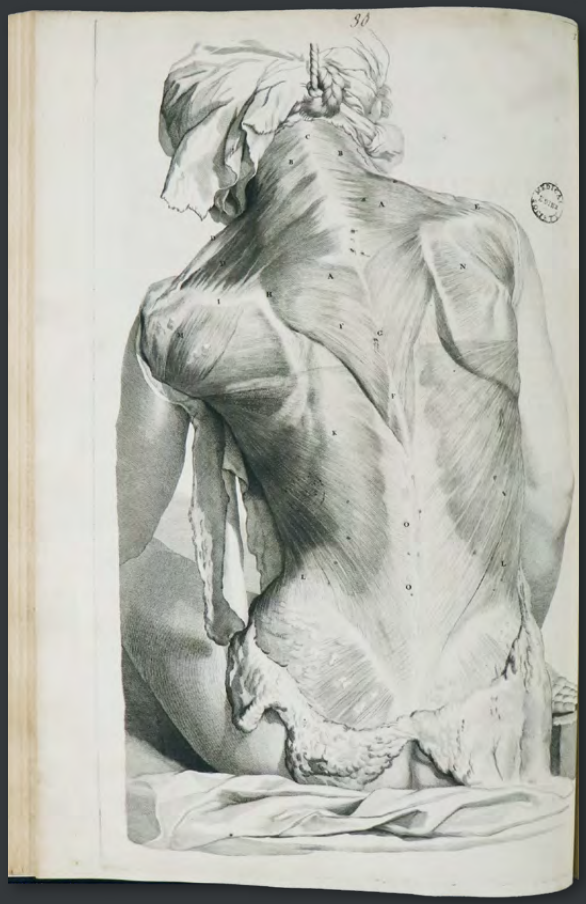


Fig. 19. The muscle structure of the upper and lower back. An example of the new use of intaglio printing to render fine details.

A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Herbals

Herbals are encyclopedic texts that serve as a guide to or catalogue of plants that have medicinal properties. They describe in detail, often with images, the characteristics of numerous plants and the types of conditions/symptoms these plants are used to treat (at the time the text was written). Herbalism, or the use of plants as medicines, was practiced from prehistoric times until the development of the germ theory of disease in the nineteenth century. Evidence-based use of pharmaceutical drugs, often derived from medicinal plants, has largely replaced herbal treatments in modern health care (Arber).

Phytognomonica Io. Baptistae Portae Neapol. Octo libris contenta; in quibus nova, facillimque affertur methodus, qua plantarum, animalium, mettallorum, rerum denique omnium ex prima extimae faciei inspectione quiuis abditas vires assequatur ... Nunc primùm ab innumeris mendis, quibus passim Neapolitana editio scatebat vindicata; cum rerum & verborum indice locuppletissimo

della Porta, Giambattista
(Francofurti, apud I. Wechelum & P. Fischerum, 1591)
QK 41 P83 1591

Gianbattista della Porta was an Italian scholar, polymath, and playwright who lived in Naples at the time of the Scientific Revolution and Reformation. He wrote on many topics including on magic, astrology, alchemy, and natural philosophy.

Phytognomonica is his handbook of botany, which lists plants by geographic location. In this work, della Porta posited that the healing powers of plants could be determined by observing their external structures. This theory is known as the "Doctrine of Signatures" and suggests that God created plants in such a way as to indicate to the observer the diseases and ailments that they could cure. The 34 woodcut engravings in the handbook detail the part of the body the plant resembles, suggesting a suitable medicine for that part: for instance, eyebright to treat the eye (see Fig. 22). Plants that are known to be poisonous are juxtaposed with venomous creatures such as scorpions and snakes to emphasize the similarity in their appearance, the notion being that a poisonous plant takes a similar form to a poisonous animal and can be easily spotted (Bennett).

ILLVSTR. MA-
RINO BOBALI, AN-
DREÆ FILIO RA-
GVSEO.
IOAN. BAPTISTA PORTA
Neapolit. S. P. D.

Fig. 20. Portrait of Gianbattista della Porta from *Phytognomonica*.

Phytognomonica
IO. BAPTISTAE
PORTÆ NEAPOL.
Octo libris contenta;
IN QVIBVS NOVA, FACILLIMAQVE AFFERTVR METHODVS,
qua plantarum, animalium, metallorum; rerum denique omnium ex prima extimæ faciei inspectione quiuis abditas vires assequatur.
ACCEDVNT AD HAEC CONFIRmanda infinita propemodum selectiora secreta, summo labore, temporis dispendio, & impensarum iactura vestigata, exploratque.
Nunc primùm ab innumeris mendis, quibus passim Neapolitana editio scatebat, vindicata; cum RERVM & VERBORVM Indice locupletissimo.
1591.
FRANCOFVRTI
Apud Ioannem Wechelum & Petrum Fischerum consortes.

Fig. 21. Title page of *Phytognomonica* with German printer's device from Frankfurt.

206 IOAN. BAPTISTÆ PORTAE
OCVLARIVM *florum spectandas delineationes peculiaris hæc tabella exhibet, quæ hoc capite pertractantur. primam sedem a dextris sibi vendicat asteris Attici planta; secundam pardalianchis aconiti, subsequentem aizoi; postremam anthemidis. In calce inspectiua, & in obliquum oculos expressimus.*
nem, non alibi habet ad visus claritatem valere variis experimentis 136
clara est. Nulli auium maiores oculi quam buboni; valet ad idem.
Noctuæ

Fig. 22. Woodcut illustration depicting the concept of the "Doctrine of Signatures." Here plants that resemble eyes are presented as cures for various ailments of the eye.

The Complete herbal, to which is now added, upwards of one hundred additional herbs, with a display of their medicinal and occult qualities; physically applied to the cure of all disorders incident to mankind: to which are now first annexed, the English physician enlarged, and key to physic, with rules for compounding medicine according to the true system of nature. Forming a complete family dispensatory, and natural system of physic. To which is also added upwards of fifty choice receipts, selected from the author's Last legacy to his wife.

Culpeper, Nicholas
(London, T. Kelly, 1841)
RS 81 C958 1841

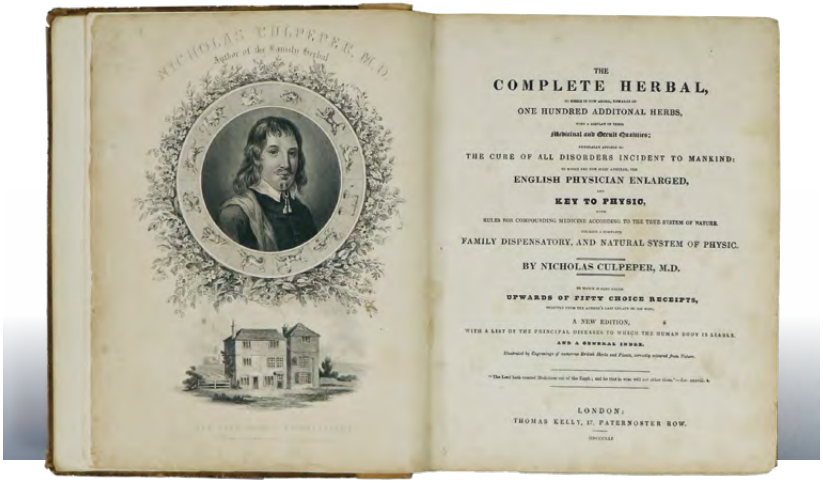


Fig. 23. Cover page of *The Complete Herbal* with portrait of Nicholas Culpeper.

Once belonging to Heber C. Jamieson, U of A Professor of the History of Medicine, this 1841 edition of Culpeper's *The Complete Herbal* (originally published in 1653) includes vibrant illustrations of a wide range of plants used for centuries as medicinal cures.

Nicholas Culpeper was an English botanist, herbalist, physician, and astrologer. He spent much of his life outdoors cataloging hundreds of medicinal herbs to provide a comprehensive guide for the masses on how to find, identify, and use plants for healing. His work was ground breaking for combining the "Doctrine of Signatures," used by previous herbalists such as della Porta, with the field of astrology and the signs of the zodiac. This combination created a new practice called "Astrological Herbalism," in which specific ailments were treated by determining what sign and planet ruled over the part of the body that needed care, and then prescribing a herb of the same astrological sign (Curry).

Culpeper's philosophy on the practice of medicine involved empowering the lower and less-educated classes to take control of their own health and well-being, and as such, he was one of the first authors of the time to publish in English instead of Latin. Furthermore, his text was written in informal and accessible language. Its index of plants and diseases was visually appealing and relatively simple to use, facilitating the identification of an appropriate cure for an ailment. In its day, and for centuries to come, *The Complete Herbal* was an extremely popular publication not only for its medical information but also for the tone Culpeper wrote it in. It is at times humorous and vulgar,

and it is full of anger, with political and religious criticisms peppered throughout (Woolley). See, for instance, Culpeper's entry on Woodbine and his criticism of medical doctors using "tradition" instead of "experience" and "reason" with medicinal plants:

> **WOODBINE, OR HONEY-SUCKLES.**
>
> *It is a plant so common, that every one that hath eyes knows it, and he that hath none, cannot read a description, if I should write it.*
>
> *Time.]* They flower in June, and the fruit is ripe in August.
>
> *Government and virtues.]* Doctor Tradition, that grand introducer of errors, that hater of truth, lover of folly, and the mortal foe to Dr. Reason, hath taught the common people to use the leaves or flowers of this plant in mouth-water, and by long continuance of time, hath so grounded it in the brains of the vulgar, that you cannot beat it out with a beetle: All mouth-waters ought to be cooling and drying, but Honey Suckles are cleansing, consuming and digesting, and therefore fit for inflammations; thus Dr. Reason. Again if you please, we will leave Dr. Reason a while, and come to Dr. Experience, a learned gentleman, and his brother. Take a leaf and chew it in your mouth, and you will quickly find it likelier to cause a sore mouth and throat than to cure it. Well then, if it be not good for this, What is it good for? It is good for something, for God and nature made nothing in vain... (p. 249).

Fig. 24. Examples of the coloured illustrations of medicinal plants Culpeper included to facilitate their identification and use.

A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Midwifery

De secretis mulierum libellus: scholiis auctus, & à mendis repurgatus. Ejusdem de virtutibus herbarum, lapidum, & animalium quorundam libellus. Item de mirabilibus mundi, ac de quibusdam effectibus causatis à quibusdam animalibus, &c. Adjectum est ob materiae similitudinem Michaelis Scoti philosohi, de secretis naturae opusculum. Cum indice locupletissimo.

Albertus, Magnus
(Lugduni : Excudebat Ioannes Martinus, 1584)
R 128 A33 1584

This tiny, portable volume from 1584 was originally written during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The title translates as "The Secrets of Women" or "Of the Secrets of Women." The author, Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280), also known as Saint Albert the Great or Albert of Cologne, was a German Dominican friar, philosopher, scientist, and bishop. He was later canonized as a Catholic saint but was also known during his lifetime as Doctor Universalis and Doctor Expertus in recognition of his great breadth of knowledge (Shampo and Kyle).

The work draws on Hippocratic, Galenic, and Aristotelian theories, relating them to sexuality and reproduction from both a medical and philosophical perspective. It was written to instruct celibate medieval monks on "the facts of life," but it is now notorious for its messages on the evil and lascivious nature of women. Historically, it is often credited with laying the groundwork for centuries of female persecution (Lemay).

The thirteen chapters of the book explore both strictly medical topics (signs of conception, the period of gestation, the nature of the menses) and theoretical topics involving astrology, such as how the planets and constellations can affect a developing fetus. Even for its time, it lacks basic medical knowledge and can be viewed as comical by a modern reader, but various passages also showcase Albertus's misogynistic attempts at using the biological nature of women to confirm their inferiority and evil nature. For example, the author advises that women keep themselves away from men during their monthly periods as the period is considered poisonous. It can even harm the eyes of children if they are looked upon by a woman with her period. He goes on to assert that when menstruation stops at menopause, the retention of menses builds up and results in an excess of evil humours, which can escape through the eyes and infect the air, polluting the world (Lemay).

Fig. 25. Title page of *De Secretis* with inscriptions (and doodles) of previous owners, some centuries old.

Des maladies des femmes grosses et accouchees: avec la bonne et veritable méthode de les bien aider en leurs accouchemens naturels, & les moyens de remedier à tous ceux qui sont contre-nature, & aux indispositions des enfans nouveau-nés: ensemble une tres-exacte description de toutes les parties de la femme qui sont destinées à la generation: le tout accompagné de plusieurs belles figures en taille douce, nouvellement & fort correctement gravées: oeuvre très-utile auc chirurgiens, & necessaure à toutes le sages-femmes pour apprendre àbien pratiquer l'art des accouchemens

Mauriceau, François
(Paris: Chez Jean Henault, 1668)
RG 93 M45 1668

A first edition of François Mauriceau's ground-breaking work on obstetrics from 1668, this work is considered a seminal text and is credited with establishing obstetrics as a legitimate science. Mauriceau was a leading obstetrician in seventeenth-century Europe and was known for developing a classical manoeuvre of assisted breech delivery (Mauriceau-Levret manipulation). His detailed analysis of the mechanisms of labour, his introduction of the practice of delivering women in bed rather than in the obstetric chair, and his revolutionary account of the prevention of congenital syphilis by antisyphilitic treatment during pregnancy paved the way for modern obstetrical care. Mauriceau's instructions for extracting the head in breech delivery with the aid of an index finger in the infant's mouth is still used today and is now called the "Mauriceau maneuver" (Jeremy M. Norman).

A beautiful feature of the volume is the frontispiece, drawn by Antoine Paille and engraved by Guillaume Vallet, which includes a cameo portrait of Mauriceau himself, illustrations of his instruments, and a notice in small print at the foot of the page with the street address of his office where he could be consulted, as well as its cross-street. It was unusual in the seventeenth century for a medical author to advertise his practice on the frontispiece of a serious medical treatise (H. F. Norman).

It is worth noting that the *Rawlinson* copy of this work contains many unique signatures and inscriptions of its successive owners over the last three-and-a-half centuries. From France to England to Canada, the travels of the volume are traced via the inked scripts that adorn the front and back pages and inside covers.

qui sont contre nature. Livre II. 321
CHAPITRE XXIV.
De l'accouchement auquel l'enfant presente l'épaule, ou le dos, ou le cul.
LA plus difficile de ces trois sortes de figures & situations auſquelles les enfans ſe preſentent parfois, eſt

Fig.26. Images of fetal presentations in *Des Maladies* with descriptions of techniques used for breech deliveries that are still used today.

Charitas
perfectionis media
Les Maladies
des Femmes Grosses et accouchées.
Composé par François Mauriceau, Maistre
Chirurgien Juré à Paris, demeurant rue St
Jacques, au coing de la rue Zacharie, à
l'enseigne du bon medecin
avec Privil. du Roy 1668.

Fig. 27. Frontispiece of *Des Maladies* with portrait of François Mauriceau featuring the address of the author's practice.

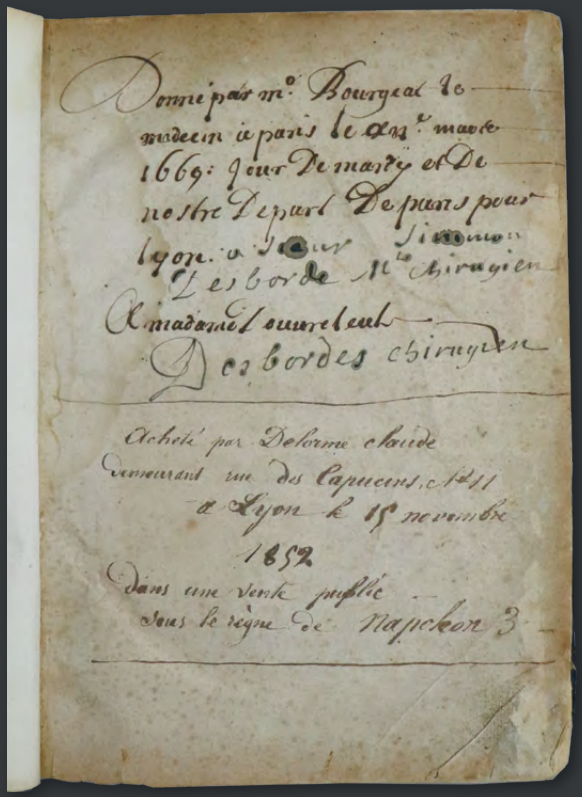

Donné par mr. Bourgeat le
medecin à paris le 20me mars
1669: pour Demarÿ et De
notre Depart Depuis pour
lyon. à Jeur Simon
Lesborde Mre Chirurgien
A madame Courteul
Desbordes chirurgien
Acheté par Delorme chaude
demeurant rue des Capucins, c.t 211
à Lyon le 15 novembre
1852
dans une vente publique
sous le règne de Napoleon 3

Fig. 28. Inscriptions of previous owners of *Des Maladies* through the centuries.

A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Anthrodermic Bibliopegy and the Infamous "Skin Book"

Celsi De medicina libri octo. Brevioribus Rob. Constantini, Is. Casauboni, Aliorumque Scholiis ac locis parallelis illustrati.
Celsus, Aulus Cornelius
(Patavii, excudebat Josephus Cominus, 1722)
R 127 C39 1722

The most controversial and extensively examined book in the *Rawlinson Collection* is the 1722 edition of Greek philosopher Celsus's Latin medical treatise, *De Medicina (On Medicine)*. It gained notoriety throughout its history at the U of A by purportedly being bound in human skin. It is unknown where this information originally came from, save for a note placed in its pages from sometime in the 1970s, but the folklore surrounding this text was passed on from medical librarian to medical librarian, and it became a rite of passage to view the infamous text during one's tenure at the library.

De Medicina is considered to be the only surviving section of what would have been a much larger encyclopedia. It consists of eight books dedicated to the early history of medicine, pathology, diseases, parts of the body, surgery, and orthopedics, and two books on pharmacology. It contains considerable information about plant cures used in early Rome, and it is one of the best sources concerning medical knowledge in the Roman world.

But is it made of human skin?

Although gruesome, the practice of binding books in human skin (called "anthropodermic bibliopegy") did take place, albeit in a secretive manner. Human skin shares many similarities with the skin of animals like pigs and cows and can be turned to leather using the same processes that other animal skins undergo. Because leather made from human skin also looks remarkably similar to leathers produced from other animal skin (particularly pig skin), there have been many instances of books that were bound in animal leather being mistaken for those bound in human skin (Gordon).

Fig. 29. Title page of *De Medicina* with portrait of Celsus.

As of 2022, *The Anthropodermic Book Project*, a team of American scientists and anthropologists, has examined 31 out of 50 books reported to have anthropodermic bindings. Through scientific testing using DNA analysis and peptide mass fingerprinting they have been able to confirm that 18 of these books are bound in human skin and 13 are bound in animal leather instead (https://anthropodermicbooks.org). To put rumors to rest, the *Rawlinson* "skin book" was tested using peptide mass fingerprinting, and it was determined that the book is NOT bound in human skin. It is bound in a much more conventional material—sheep skin.

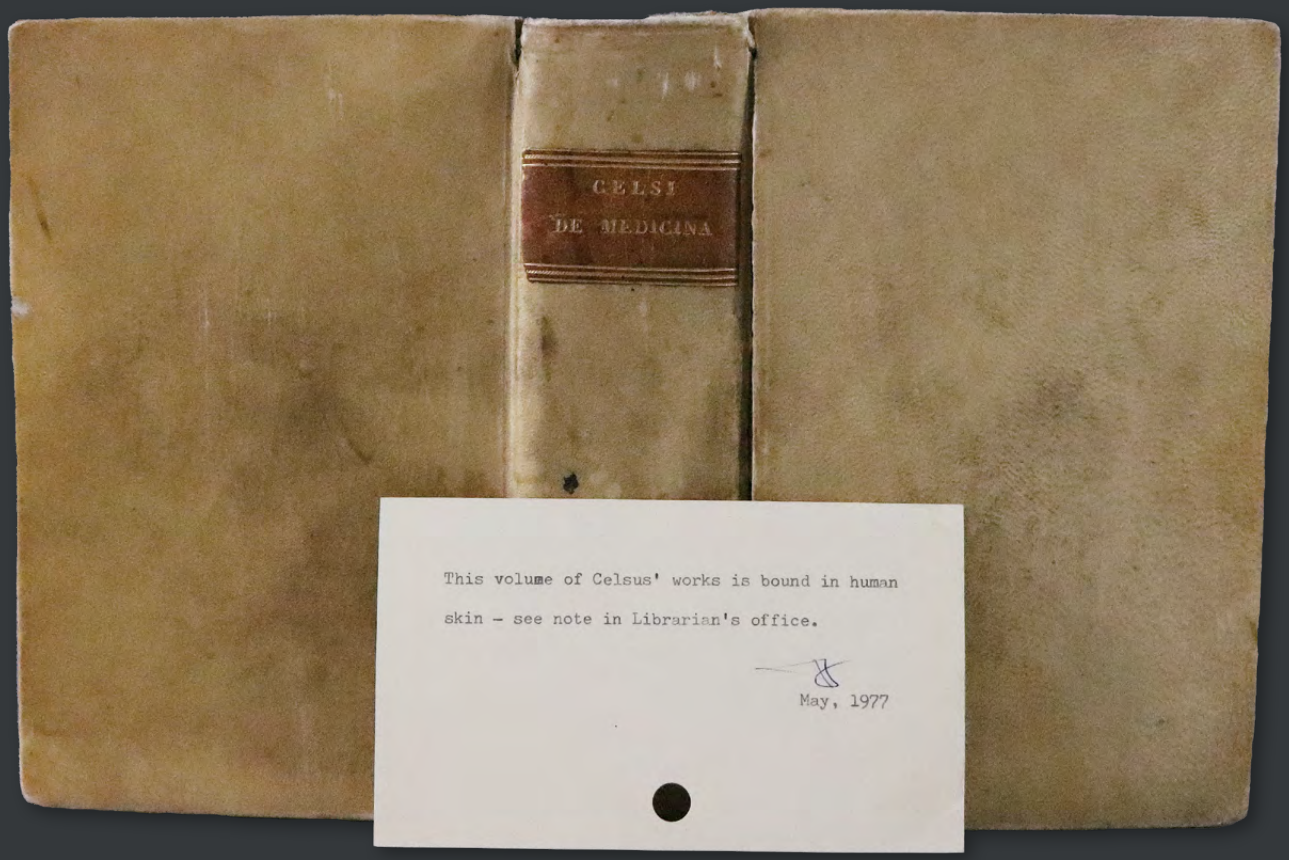


Fig. 30. Cover of the "Skin Book" or Celsus's *De Medicina*, with note stating that the volume is bound in human skin placed in front.

A SELECTION OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Medical Manuals on the Prairies

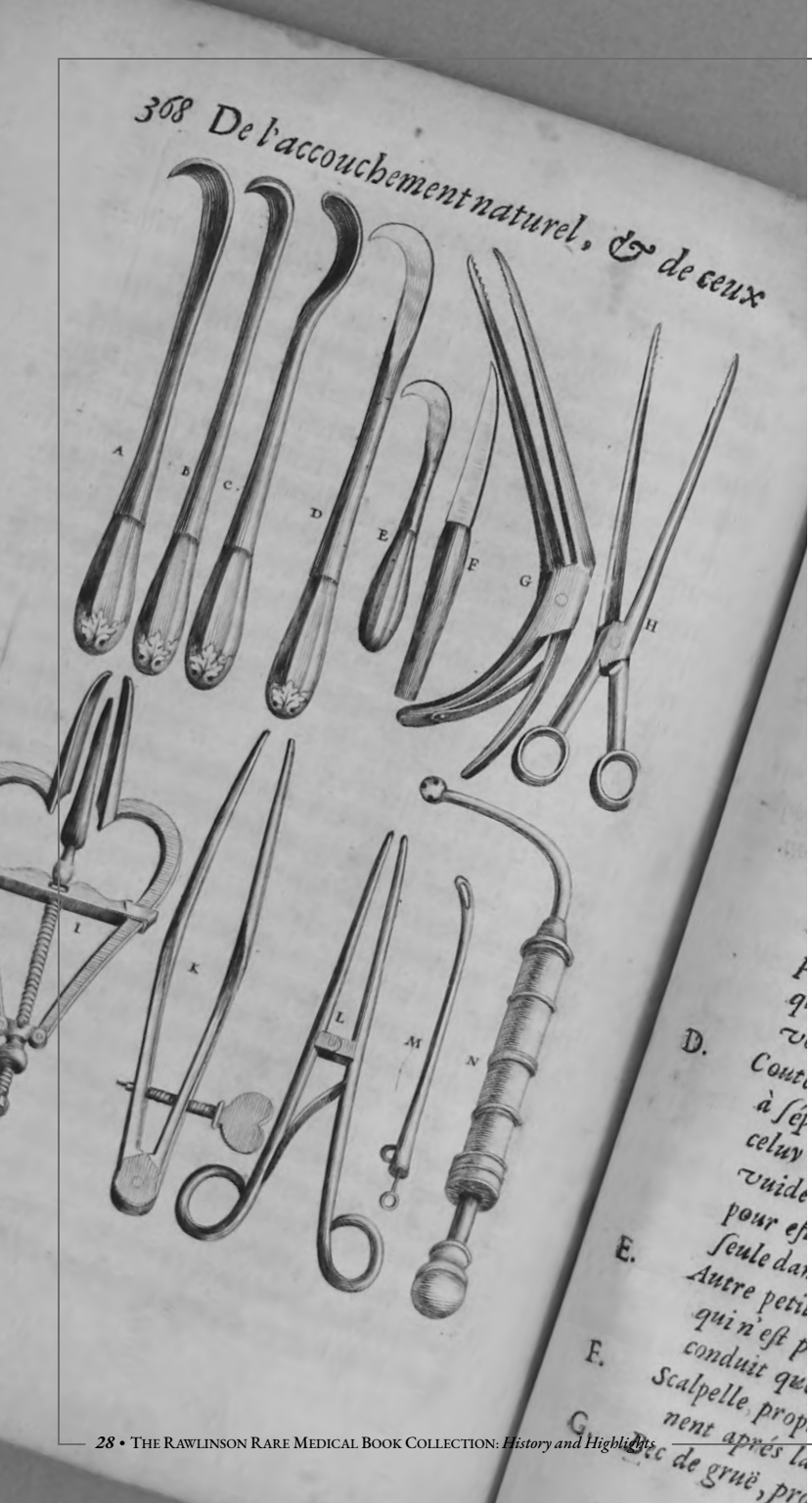
Fig. 31. A well-worn copy of Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*. The state of this volume testifies to its long history of use as an everyday manual for home health care.

Domestic medicine or, The family physician: being an attempt to render the medical art more generally useful, by shewing people what is in their own power both with respect to the prevention and cure of diseases. Chiefly calculated to recommend a proper attention to regimen and simple medicines.
Buchan, William
(Edinburgh: Printed by Balfour, Auld and Smellie, 1769)
RC 81 B918 1769

Through both active collecting and donations, the *Rawlinson Collection* has become particularly strong in the area of domestic medicine. Manuals of domestic medicine served as essential self-care guides for families, especially for those that lived in rural and remote areas where access to a physician could be costly or difficult. These manuals were primarily used to teach proper care and treatment of the sick or injured, but they also delved into topics such as hygiene, the care of the body, and sexual education, and some even had sections related to the care of farm animals. These manuals were passed down through families in Alberta and used in the home where, for most of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the majority of routine care of the sick was performed by family members—primarily mothers, sisters, and daughters.

One of the oldest examples of a domestic medicine manual in the *Rawlinson Collection* is William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*. While home medicine was practiced from as far back as the early colonial era, Buchan's publication took medicine out of the hands of the few and put it in the hands of the many. This was a significant development, as medicine previously had been physician-centered. Books relating to domestic medicine served as a resource for better health care for those who could not afford a physician or did not have access to more technologically advanced practices of medicine. Published in 1769, *Domestic Medicine* was printed in Britain until 1846 and in the Americas until 1913. It describes diseases and treatments thoroughly enough to allow people to create cures themselves but also emphasizes prevention of disease and the importance of hygiene, which was a new concept (Lawrence).

Fig. 32. Inside cover of *Domestic Medicine* including name plate and inscription of a previous owner.



Conclusion

The ten items described here are only a sampling of what the *Rawlinson Collection* offers. It is the hope that this short guide gives readers a taste for more.

Regular workshops given virtually and in person at Bruce Peel Special Collections (https://bpsc.library.ualberta.ca/info/workshops) allow those interested in exploring, admiring, and even turning the pages of these texts an opportunity for deeper investigation. We look forward to connecting with and seeing rare book, history, and medical science enthusiasts enjoy the *Rawlinson Collection* and celebrate its marvels.

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